



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Trafficking in Persons Report

Released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
June 3, 2005

V. Country Narratives

ARGENTINA (TIER 2)

Argentina is primarily a destination country for women and children trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. Most victims are trafficked internally, from rural to urban areas, for exploitation in the commercial sex trade. Some Argentine women and girls are trafficked abroad, mainly for sexual exploitation in Brazil, Paraguay, or Spain. Women and children are trafficked from Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil for commercial sexual exploitation, and migrants from neighboring countries are sometimes trafficked to Argentina for other types of forced labor. Traffickers often threaten or inflict physical violence, restrict victims' movements, and forge documents to conceal the nationality and age of victims.

The Government of Argentina does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Officials investigated and prosecuted cases related to commercial sexual exploitation rings, and the government named a national coordinator on trafficking issues. Future government actions should address the slowness of the judicial process and ensure that any official involved in or facilitating trafficking is prosecuted. The government should also implement national policies to protect victims, prevent trafficking, and strengthen efforts to prosecute traffickers and collect data on trafficking crimes and prosecutions.

Prosecution

Law enforcement investigated and prosecuted some trafficking-related cases, but heavy case loads for prosecutors, Argentina's slow judicial process, and, in some instances, police officer complicity in trafficking activities hampered efforts to combat trafficking during the reporting period. The government lacked a coordinated law enforcement strategy and a comprehensive anti-trafficking law. The government used other laws to address trafficking-related crimes, with penalties ranging from one to 20 years in prison. During the reporting period, authorities investigated at least two new cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation involving more than four traffickers. Two other investigations of alleged trafficking-related disappearances remained pending, with some suspects in detention. Argentine courts convicted three traffickers who sexually exploited women and girls from Paraguay; defendants received four to 12 years in prison. There were no allegations of national government officials involved in trafficking, but prosecutors launched new investigations of police involved in trafficking women for commercial sexual exploitation, and a case implicating 19 officials in trafficking-related offenses remained pending in the courts.

Protection

Individual provinces provided some assistance to trafficking victims, but resources were insufficient for comprehensive care and protection. Prosecutors encouraged victims to support prosecutions and referred them to victims of crime centers, but no government services met specific trafficking victim needs and few NGOs worked directly with victims. A bill with provisions to assist and protect trafficking victims remained pending in Congress. The project "Luz de Infancia," which is aimed at combating commercial sexual exploitation of minors, assisted 18 children. Identified trafficking victims were not detained or forcibly deported, but not all officials understood the difference between trafficking and illegal migration or prostitution that was not trafficking-related. IOM repatriated nine women victims and dependents to their home countries; government agencies consulted IOM about additional cases involving approximately 20 women.

Prevention

Government prevention efforts during the reporting period were localized and failed to educate the wider public. The Luz de Infancia program in Puerto Iguazu and Buenos Aires municipal programs offered public awareness and education outreach. Buenos Aires authorities ran a telephone hotline, a poster campaign, and education for secondary school and public health officials on identifying and assisting victims of child sexual exploitation. The Foreign Ministry trained consular officers to assist victims. The government organized or participated in workshops and meetings on trafficking throughout the year. In late 2004, it appointed a national anti-trafficking coordinator to improve coordination of government and civil society efforts.

The U.S. Government's International Anti-Trafficking Programs Fiscal Year 2004

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Fiscal Year 2004**Argentina**

Tier	2
Type	Prevention, Protection, Prosecution
Agency	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (DOS/ PRM)
Amount	\$173,656
Grantee(s)	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Purpose	For capacity-building activities for government and NGOs, including two-day workshop; to develop and disseminate information campaign; and to establish a hotline.